

**Minutes of the
Northern Lights / Bayfield County Special Study Committee Meeting
1:30pm, July 24, 2023**

**Meeting was held Remotely through Microsoft Teams and in person in the Bayfield County
Emergency Operations Center, Washburn, WI**

Members Present: Jeff Silbert, Mark Ehlers, Mary Dougherty, Ellen Avol-Law

Members Excused:

Others Present: Mark Abeles-Allison-County Administrator, Paige Terry-Clerk III, Carrie Linder-Bayfield County Human Services Aging & Disability Services Manager, Kellie Pederson-UW Extension Community Development Educator, Kim Mattson-Bayfield County Accountant, Michelle Stouffer-Acting Northern Lights Administrator, Autumn Koleski-Northern Lights Human Resources Director, Rene Eastman-Vice President of Financial and Regulatory Services for Leading Age Wisconsin, Peter Radmer-Northern Lights Board Director, Larry Fickbohm-County Board Supervisor

Called to order at 1:30 p.m. by *Committee Chair*, Mary Dougherty

Introductions: Introductions were made.

Reading of Purpose Statement: Dougherty read the purpose statement to the board.

Minutes from July 12, 2023: *Motion by Silbert, seconded by Avol-Law to approve the minutes for the July 12, 2023 Northern Lights / Bayfield County Special Study Committee Meeting as amended. Motion carried.*

Public Comment: None.

Purpose Statement: The committee reviewed Abeles-Allison's dissection of the purpose statement in an attempt to set clear expectations for the committee. The committee agreed on the following recommendations:

a) Short-Term Success Strategy:

- a. The facility obtains financial stability which is defined as the equivalent of one month of cash in the bank.
- b. The Northern Lights Board and facility management will be stable with a clear understanding of the roles.
- c. Continued focus on infrastructure repair and replacement.
- d. Solidification of the facility's processes while establishing patient accountability.
- e. Develop a clear planning process.
- f. Review the recommendations made during the previously conducted Market Assessment and follow up the assessment with a Business Feasibility Analysis.

b) Long-Term Success Strategy:

- a. The facility is financially stable with the equivalent of two months of cash in the bank.
 - b. The Northern Lights Board and facility management will be stable with a clear understanding of the roles.
 - c. Infrastructure is up to date.
 - d. A clear planning process is in place.
 - e. Accounts receivable is down to a 6-week turnaround.
 - f. Establish a Bayfield County / Northern Lights agreement that will establish clarity and accountability to ensure the facility's success.
 - g. Participate in collaboration with other community members.
- c) **Capital Improvement Listing:** The committee reviewed the capital improvement list included in the packet. Stouffer reported that she is waiting on more project estimates to come in. Ehlers informed the committee that he has yet to meet with Bayfield County IT Director, Paul Houck but suspects the entire IT infrastructure will need to be replaced. Dougherty stated she would like to see a complete capital list by the next committee meeting. Silbert recommended prioritizing the list. Ehlers stated he would add the IT improvements to the capital improvement list. Dougherty suggested the committee discuss at the next meeting if the county would be willing to pay for some or all of the facility's capital improvements.
- d) **Market Study Overview:** Dougherty reviewed a brief overview of the market assessment. Silbert asked if the Northern Lights facility would have room on campus for memory care beds and if those beds would be profitable. Stouffer reported she is currently reviewing the requirements for a memory care facility and stated that memory care beds do appear to be profitable. Discussion regarding renovating the Northern Lights facility to include space for memory care residents. Pederson recommended researching the possibility of adding a memory care section to Northern Lights and recommended that a Business Feasibility Analysis be conducted as a follow up to the Market Assessment that was conducted for Northern Lights.
- e) **Non-Profit Model Review:** The committee reviewed the current model and compared it to other models. The committee is comfortable with the current non-profit model.

Pederson suggested that the county continue its lobbying efforts for the increase in Medicare/Medicaid rates.

Suggestions from Collaboration Committee: Abeles-Allison reviewed a list of collaboration opportunities with the committee. Dougherty suggested having a more in-depth discussion of all the opportunities at the next meeting.

Northern Lights Board Development: Dougherty recommended adding the item to the Northern Lights Board agenda and dispensing with the item due to time constraints of the meeting.

Next Meeting Topics: The committee discussed the following topics:

- In-Depth Review of Suggestions from Collaboration Committee
- Northern Lights Board Development

- 2023 Financial Update
- Capital Improvement Listing and County Involvement

Next Meeting Dates:

- Thursday, August 10, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. (EOC)
- Monday, August 21, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. (EOC)

2023 Financial Update: Ehlers delivered a financial update to the committee and reported that the facility will not be receiving the \$85,000 that they believed they would for the Medicaid Reimbursement from the year before. Ehlers explained that Northern Lights was also notified that they were overpaid for reimbursements by \$19,000.

Meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Paige Terry.